Obispoensis

Newsletter of the San Luis Obispo Chapter of the California Native Plant Society

January 2026

COVER PHOTO *Chichorum intybus*
*(*SLO Chapter Photo Collection)

CHICORY (*Chichorum intybus*)
Dr. Dirk Walters

The plant I'd like to talk about in this Obispoensis issue is not a native. I apologize for that, but I find weeds and their history to be fun and interesting. Chicory is a weed. It is native to Europe, North Africa, Western Asia, India, Pakistan, and naturalized throughout North America, South America, China and Taiwan. It long ago came to the notice of early human inhabitants as both a food and a beverage, which probably accounts for its global distribution. According to the internet, it's highly nutritious with relatively few calories, but possesses healthy levels of fat and sodium, fiber, protein, manganese, phosphorus, potassium and vitamin C to be considered extremely healthy. As it is reported to be harsh to taste, I haven't had the courage to even nibble a leaf, which is said to be used in brewing tea and supplementing salads. I understand you must be a knowledgeable cook to create tasty dishes, using it primarily as an addition to other more edible foods. Chicory and its relative endive are both used as spices.

This brings us to its most widespread use as a coffee substitute. Just before the American Revolutionary War, England was having financial problems, leading to a series of tariffs and duties on imports into the colonies. The application to tea imports led to the Boston Tea Party and eventually to the Revolutionary War. How does chicory enter the story? The Colonists quickly made drinking coffee into a patriotic act, but the vast increase in demand encouraged the use of chicory and other stretchers. The custom of using chicory seems to have arisen with French colonists in New Orleans, but it was also used in England during Napoleon's blockades that hit their coffee supply.

Chicory is a member of the very diverse Sunflower family. Members of this family produce tiny flowers tightly packed together surrounded by a ring of tiny leaves (bracts or phyllaries). Most of the family produces two types of flowers defined by the arrangement of their petals: either in a radially symmetrical tube (tube or disk flowers) or with a single tongue-like structure derived from 3 petals (ray flower). Chicory belongs to a different group (Group 8) in Dr. Keil's key to groups of the Sunflower family in his SLO County Flora. This group has heads with only one type of flower (ligulate) and this resembles the shape of a ray flower, but is derived from 5 petals. Many of this group also possess milky sap, as does chicory. Nothing more needs to be said about its identification other than to suggest one goes to the Group 8 key in Dr. Keil's book and read the first couplet – "Corolla blue …… *Cichorium*". That says it all. Its San Luis Obispo county distribution is primarily coastal, as it apparently doesn't like it too hot or dry, but it can be found wherever humans disturb the landscape. The root of the plant is dried and roasted to create the coffee additive. Chicory, including its leaves (like radicchio) and roots, is a low-calorie, nutrient-dense vegetable rich in fiber, particularly the prebiotic inulin, which boosts gut health, aids digestion, and supports blood sugar control. It provides essential vitamins like K and A, minerals such as potassium, calcium, and magnesium, plus antioxidants, offering benefits for bone health, blood pressure, and fighting inflammation.

Addendum by the Editor

During the mid- to late-1940s there was severe rationing in England, and coffee was a luxury that was beyond my parents' budget. However,we used a product, Camp Coffee, which was a syrup based mainly on chicory extract. The ingredients were sugar, water, chicory extract (around 25%), and dried coffee extract (around 4%). The product still exists, but use now is mainly as a flavoring additive in cooking. Rather interesting is the evolution of the bottle's label, from shades of the 'Raj' and racial status in the bottle I remember (servant and master- left picture) to apparent racial equality (center picture) which is retained in today's plastic bottle version (right picture).

India is a significant producer of chicory, primarily grown in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, supplying both domestic needs (especially for filter coffee blends) and major global markets like the U.S. and Europe, and leveraging good soil, advanced processing, and cost-effectiveness. Production involves contract farming with farmers using imported French seeds, focusing on processing roots into dried/roasted cubes for coffee additives, with companies like Nestlé enhancing quality through improved techniques and farmer support.

CHAPTER BOARD ELECTION: RESULTS AND CONGRATULATIONS

Thanks to all who participated in the Election of Officers during our December 4th General Meeting. The elected slate of officers for 2026 is as follows: Co-Presidents Bill Waycott and Dena Grossenbacher; Vice President Mike Butler; Treasurer Dave Krause; and Recording Secretary Kyle Suchy. We thank these good people who are such an important part of making our SLO Chapter function. And we are grateful for the generous help provided by our outgoing Vice President Jacqueline Rose and outgoing Recording Secretary Cindy Roessler; thank you both! **Susi Bernstein, CNPS-SLO Nominations Committee**

THERE IS NO JANUARY CHAPTER GENERAL MEETING.
NEXT MEETING FEBRUARY 12th, SOUTH BAY COMMUNITY CENTER
2180 PALISADES AVENUE, LOS OSOS

(PROGRAM DETAILS WILL BE IN THE FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER)

KEIR MORSE'S UNOFFICIAL BOTANY HIKE EMAIL LIST

For anyone interested, botanist Keir Morse has an email list to announce botany/nature hikes and trips that he is involved in organizing. These are generally unofficial hikes and not part of CNPS, but CNPS members are welcome. They tend to be relatively short notice, often full-day, and what will happen may not be fully known until it has happened. Trips may have a focus on finding or learning certain taxa, bioblitzing an area, trying to answer certain research questions, documenting plant smells, or just following the whims of its participants. Ideal participants like to document plants and other organisms on iNaturalist or Calflora, identify plants using keys, go very slow or very fast depending on the goal, and have full-day adventures, though not all adventures will be full-day ones.

If you would like to be added to Keir's botany hike email list, you can email him and request to be added to the list.

Keir Morse - vestigial_hippo@yahoo.com

Editor's Note: If you spend any time at all looking at plant photographs on the Calflora web site, there is a strong chance you will be seeing a photo from Keir,

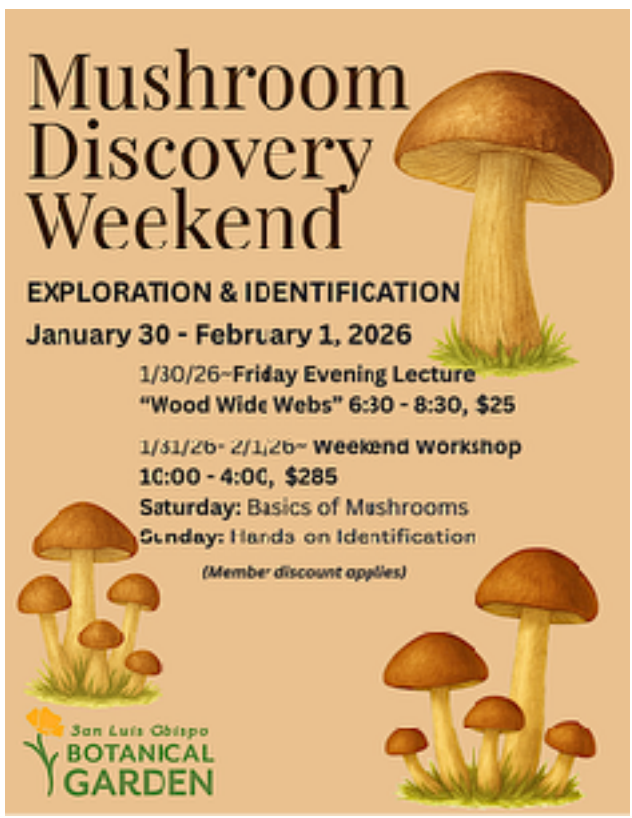
Carrizo Plain post-fire conditions 12/12/25. Upper Left: Grassland burnt (left side of road) and unburned (right side of road); Upper Right: Vivid green grass regrowth in burned areas, Caliente Ridge Road Overlook; Lower Left: The site of the old red barn at Selby with burnt/unburnt juniper; Lower Right: OHV damage that took place during the government shutdown.

FIELD TRIPS

This is a ticketed event with limited attendance, so please sign up to get a ticket. Tickets will be available 12/27 on our website. Once ticketed, the meeting place and time will be given, along with a link to WaiverSign. Here is the link: **https://cnpsslo.org/event/mushroom-walk-at-fiscalini-ranch-joint-with-cnps-and-ffrp/**

San Luis Obispo Botanic Garden Mushroom Discovery Weekend

"The San Luis Obispo Botanic Garden will be offering another season of Mushroom Discovery weekend, which includes a Friday lecture, a Saturday/Sunday workshop, and a Monday fieldtrip. "



The Mushroom is the Elf of Plants: Emily Dickinson

The Mushroom is the Elf of Plants -
At Evening, it is not
At Morning, in a Truffled Hut
It stop opon a Spot

As if it tarried always
And yet it's whole Career
Is shorter than a Snake's Delay -
And fleeter than a Tare -

'Tis Vegetation's Juggler -
The Germ of Alibi -
Doth like a Bubble antedate
And like a Bubble, hie -

I feel as if the Grass was pleased
To have it intermit -
This surreptitious Scion
Of Summer's circumspect.

Had Nature any supple Face
Or could she one contemn -
Had Nature an Apostate -
That Mushroom - it is Him!

LOOKING BACK: NO JANUARY NEWSLETTERS

Until recently, there were no January newsletters as it was the month of the annual banquet, and the only mail-out was associated with making reservations and giving details on the program.

FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, January 17th, 10:00 am, visit to the Rice Ranch Open Space, Orcutt, CA.

Join us for a walk through chaparral and oak woodland on the Rice Ranch property. This location is one of the greenspace areas available to residents of the Santa Maria/Orcutt region. During the walk, we will hear from locals about a proposed native plant restoration project where CNPS could participate. Meet in the parking lot at the south end of South Bradley Road (34.851820, -120.418873) in Orcutt. Restrooms are available. Bring water, snacks, and dress in layers for changing weather. A hat, sunscreen, and sturdy shoes are recommended. Carpooling from San Luis Obispo is available from the Halcyon Park and Ride in Arroyo Grande at 9:30 am (35.122899, -120.590258). Please sign the Liability Waiver and register for this event by clicking the link below. More information, Bill (805) 459-2103. Rain or threat of rain cancels.

Waiversign in English

waiverSign.

Waiversign en Español

waiverSign.

Citizen Science Opportunities Regarding Carrizo Plain Fire Recovery

As you probably know, Carrizo Plain National Monument was partly burned last summer. The burn was somewhat patchy, with some areas unburnt, others partially burnt, and some areas untouched. Regrowth started with the first rains of November, and paused during the dry months of December, but a large rainstorm is in the near future as we go to publish this newsletter.

If you can spare the time, this is an opportunity for you to monitor fire recovery and report your results at the end of the growing season. We suggest going into an burned area, find one or more easily re-locatable sites, and take photographs of the regrowth process. Photograph the same site at least once a month, and identify the species and anything of interest as well as you can. Mark the spot in an unobtrusive way so that you can return to exactly the same place. If you can, find the GPS location of your site, which will better enable long-term relocation. Failing that, you might choose a site based on landmarks such as a highway sign, fence-line corner, etc.

As a note to students and faculty, studies of this nature could be combined with a rigorous analysis of every aspect of post-fire recovery, such as soil micro-biota, rodent use, pollinator numbers, or whatever. The Friends of the Carrizo Plain and the Carrizo Conservancy have some funds that could be used in support of student research.

If you want to know more, contact David Chipping (dchippin@calpoly.edu) (805) 528-0914

Oak Tree Planting with Rotary Club on Saturday, February 21 2026

The Rotary Club of San Luis Obispo de Tolosa has committed to planting 10,000 native tree seedlings in San Luis Obispo as part of the City's larger carbon neutrality goal, and plantings are underway. On February 21, 100 coast live oaks are scheduled to be installed at the Miossi Open Space property, and the Rotary Club is looking for volunteers. There is a bit of a walk to get to the planting area, but the views will be well worth the effort. CNPS volunteers planted 25 oak trees on this site in December and found that in addition to supporting oak woodland restoration, the experience was quite satisfying and worthwhile. Wear sturdy shoes, hat, and dress in layers; bring gloves and water to drink. Meet at the trailhead along Old Stage Coach Road (35.318623, -120.621858). Rain or threat of rain cancels this outing.

Contact Brian Metcalf (bmetcalf805ATgmailDOTcom) for more information.

Lichen of the Month: *Buellia halonia*

The crustose lichen *Buellia halonia*, known as the Seaside Button Lichen, is found close to the coast in western North America, Australia, South Africa, and a scattering of other locations. The thallus is gray to gray-green and usually is bordered by a thin dark line. The charcoal-looking, spherical apothecia are scattered and sometimes loosely arranged in concentric rings. The species likes fine grained siliceous rocks. The photograph was taken at White Point in Morro Bay State Park.
photo: D. Chipping

Black Lake Ecological Area Workday - January 9, 2026, 9am-noon

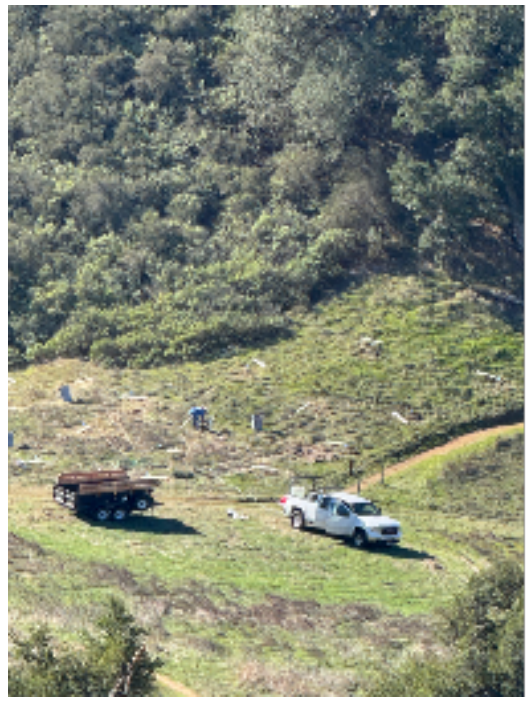
Join The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County (LCSLO) at Black Lake Ecological Area in Arroyo Grande for a day of invasive species removal and restoration site preparation. LCSLO has been managing and restoring this unique habitat for almost 30 years and is currently working on a restoration site where they are converting an old agricultural field back into native dune scrub habitat. Activities for the day will include removing invasive Sahara mustard (*Brassica tournefortii*) and perennial veldt grass (*Ehrharta calycina*) from sensitive areas surrounding rare plants and newly sprouted seedlings. Some areas of the site also need preparation for seeding for over 200 pounds of native seed that has been collected over the past few months!

More information about the specific meeting location will be sent to you before the day of the event.

Bring your preferred sun protection, water bottle, and gloves. The hike to the restoration site is about ¼ mile in soft sand with some slight hills. There are no bathroom facilities at the work site. In the case of rain, the event will be canceled.

The maximum number of participants is 20, so sign up fast! To sign up or if you have any questions, please email Kylie Schubert at kylies@lcslo.org.

Photo: Black Lake: The SLO Land Conservancy



Field Trip and Oak Tree Planting on the Harold Miossi Trail. Cuesta Grade: Photos by Grace Hayes

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Greetings from the Membership Corner!

The following list includes members who have joined, rejoined, or renewed their membership between November 15th and December 15th of this year. Those who have "joined" are brand new CNPS members, and we welcome you. Those who have "rejoined" were once CNPS members, took a break from membership and have now returned (welcome back!). "Renewed" members continued their membership by their anniversary date. Thank you all for your membership, your interest in the CNPS-SLO chapter, and your dedication to California native plants. If you have any questions regarding membership, please reach out to me at: chris.slo.cnps@gmail.com.

JOINED

Erica from Atascadero
Lauryn from Templeton
Margot from Los Osos
Nature's Touch Nursery & Harvest of Templeton
Rey from Gilroy
Shandala from Morro Bay
Victor from Sacramento
Weston from San Luis Obispo

REJOINED/RENEWED

Barbara from Los Osos
Barbara from Pasadena
Carol from San Jose
Diana from Palmdale
Edwin from San Clemente
Elisabeth from Arroyo Grande
George from Lompoc
Janin from Venice
Karen from Berkeley
Karen from Los Osos
Kristy from Los Osos
Linda from Seattle
Marie from San Luis Obispo
Mattie from Paso Robles
Meg from San Luis Obispo
Michael from Morro Bay
Richard and Donna from Arroyo Grande
Robin from San Jose
Steve and Marilyn from Nipomo
Susan from Arroyo Grande
Teresa from San Luis Obispo
Thomas from Santa Margarita

REMINDER ABOUT PERENNIAL MEMBERSHIP

.As you move forward giving voice to native plants, please consider a perennial membership. Perennial membership is a smaller monthly donation to CNPS, rather than a larger annual lump sum. For example, you might opt for a $5/month donation as a perennial member rather than a $60/year annual membership. Perennial membership is similar to 'sustaining' membership offered by public radio or television. A CNPS perennial membership can be ended or altered at any time, just like an annual membership.

Perennial membership can help take the financial sting out of a larger annual donation. Additionally, it provides a consistent, and therefore more predictable, stream of revenue for our organization. Consequently, local and statewide efforts to preserve and protect native plants and native plant communities can reliably be planned. Any consistent donation you can provide, even the $5/month minimum for a perennial membership, is appreciated and will go to good use.

If you are not yet a CNPS member or you once were, please consider becoming a member today. If you are already a member, thank you, and please consider perennial membership when you renew.

Here is a **link** to the perennial membership option, or use the associated QR code to the right..

Native Species

Alnus rhombifolia
Anthoxanthum occidentale
Arctostaphylos cruzensis
Arctostaphylos glandulosa
Arctostaphylos glauca
Arctostaphylos luciana
Arctostaphylos morroensis
Arctostaphylos osoensis
Arctostaphylos pechoensis
Arctostaphylos pilosula
Arctostaphylos rudis
Blennosperma nanum
Camissoniopsis cheiranthifolia
Cardamine californica
Cardamine oligosperma
Ceanothus cuneatus
Ceanothus oliganthus
Ceanothus spinosus
Ceanothus thyrsiflorus
Claytonia perfoliata
Clematis lasiantha
Dendromecon rigida
Dichelostemma capitatum
Diplacus aurantiacus
Erythranthe grandis
Fragaria vesca
Garrya elliptica
Leptosyne gigantea
Paeonia californica
Pedicularis rigginsiae
Plantago ovata
Quercus agrifolia
Rhamnus crocea
Ribes malvaceum
Ribes speciosum
Salix lasiolepis
Salvia spathacea
Tauschia arguta
Umbellularia californica

Introduced Species

Acacia longifolia
Brassica rapa
Brassica tournefortii
Calendula arvensis
Capsella bursa-pastoris
Cardamine hirsuta
Cistus incanus
Cotula australis
Delairea odorata
Dimorphotheca ecklonis
Genista monspessulana
Lamium amplexicaule
Lobularia maritima
Oxalis pes-caprae
Polycarpon tetraphyllum
Romulea rosea
Viola odorata

Waiting for the first flowers of the year? Here are the plants that can flower in January, according to Dr. Keil's Flora.

GETTING TO KNOW THE BRYOPHYTES
INTRODUCTION TO A NEW MONTHLY FEATURE

In Benjamin Carter's *A Preliminary Checklist of the Bryophytes of San Luis Obispo County* (Madrono, Vol 68, No. 3, pp. 141-162), he lists 156 mosses, 31 liverworts, and 5 hornworts. As far as I remember, we have paid almost no attention to this significant part of our flora, and so I thought, as editor, I should take a layperson's attempt to better understand the plants. Just to make things harder, the species descriptions are loaded with obscure terms requiring many trips to the botanic dictionary. Just as an illustration, I will show you a very understandable description of *Hedwigia stellata* the starry hoar moss, (1) from the British Bryological Society in comparison with (2) one from the *Flora of North America*, which has a lot more botanic terminology.

(*1) The 3–10 cm long, irregularly branched shoots of H. stellata form loose tufts and patches. They are glaucous green or brownish when moist, becoming pale grey as they dry. The concave, oval leaves are about 2.5 mm long, lack a nerve, and usually have a wide, colourless tip that forms a characteristic white triangle. When moist, the leaf tip is held at an angle of 45–90° from the stem; when dry, the tip becomes reflexed or recurved, giving shoot tip a starry appearance. Some forms of H. stellata have slightly curved leaves, but otherwise are not distinct from normal forms. Spherical or slightly elongated, yellowish or orange-brown capsules often form in spring and summer. They are wide below the lid, with a red mouth, and have a very short seta, so are almost hidden between leaves that have long, fine teeth on the upper margins.*

(2) Leaves 1.5–2.5 mm; margins recurved to mid leaf, plane mid leaf, erect to incurved in acumen, teeth in apex sharply, narrowly spinose, smooth; apex wide-spreading to squarrose when dry, broad, hyaline, acumen broad-based, 1/5–1/3(–1/2) leaf length, shallowly to deeply channeled, extreme apex flat or sometimes twisted; medial and distal laminal cells with papillae 1 (or 2), large, stalked, strongly, irregularly branched, branches of unequal lengths, especially on abaxial surface; laminal cells in hyaline area with papillae large, spinose, intermixed with smaller papillae; apical cell long-linear, sharply pointed, 120–175(–200) µm, smooth, 1-papillose on one margin, or 2-papillose and appearing 2-fid at tip. Perichaetia with leaves plane to weakly concave, margins long-ciliate distally, especially at apex. Vaginula sparsely pilose. Calyptra naked to sparsely pilose.

To give some structure to our future explorations, we will use the **Jepson Herbarium's California Moss eFlora: General Key**, (**https://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/CA_moss_eflora/general.html**) , and go down the key looking for moss genera and species listed by Benjamin Carter. It is a dichotomous key. You can see *Hedwigia*, described above, as entry 'E" , which we arrive at after finding the leaves are 'ecostate' (no midrib) in "B", leading to "C" as the leaves are concave, have hyaline (translucent) awns at the tip , and then leading to 'D' where the prostrate form of the moss brings us to "E" where we choose *Hedwigia* on the basis of the leaf description. The other 'E', *Lescuraea*, does not occur here, Using this approach, the reader will be able to reach themselves all of the new terms and diagnostic features used in the key.

A. Gametophyte essentially absent; plant visible as a large sporophyte (8 mm or more high) with a papillose seta and an asymmetric, capsule on an erect seta; restricted to rotten logs or highly organic soil .....Buxbaumia: *B. piperi*, *B. viridis*, *B. aphylla*
A. Not as above .....B

B. Leaves ecostate (plants considered to be ecostate usually have a short double costa that extends only a few cells above the leaf insertion; only a few cannot be shown to have a costa), or doubly costate with neither branch extending much above mid-leaf C
B. Leaves unicostate (plants considered unicostate generally have that costa extending to mid-leaf or beyond but sometimes that costa ends slightly below mid-leaf; some unicostate mosses have accessory short costae on each side of the main costa; some unicostate mosses may have that costa with short forks near its distal end) .....AH

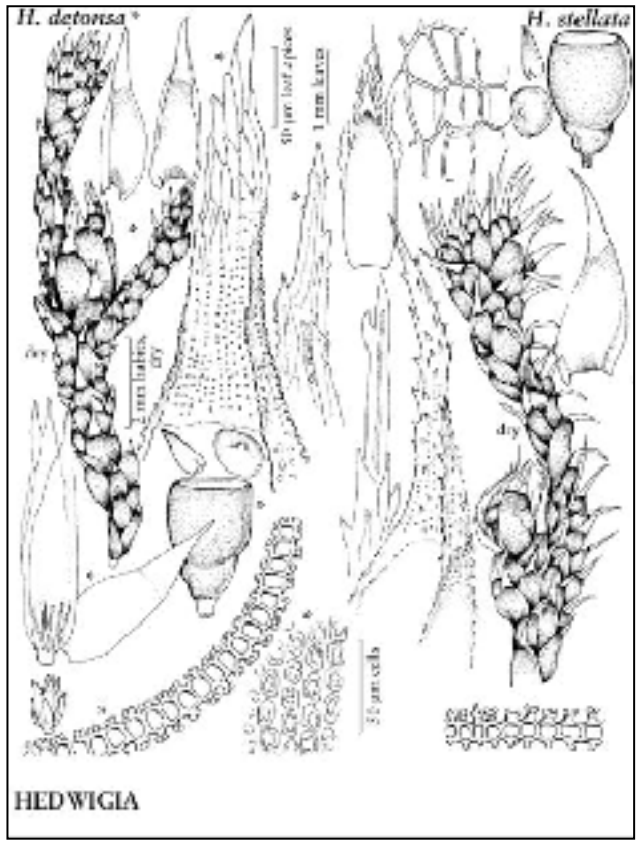
C. Leaves with hyaline awns; leaves deeply concave .....D
C. Leaves without hyaline awns; leaves various, mostly not concave .....F

D. Plant erect and unbranched; central portion of leaf with photosynthetic filaments; capsules arranged on long and straight setae .....Aloina: *A. bifrons*
D. Plant prostrate and extensively branched central portion of leaf without photosynthetic lamellae; setae long or short .....E

E. Median cells strongly papillose; leaves longer than 1 mm; capsules mostly immersed on short lateral branches .....Hedwigia: *Braunia secunda* not known from CA, *Hedwigia ciliata* not known from CA, *H. stellata*, *H. detonsa*, *Pseudobraunia californica*
E. Median cells smooth; leaves very small, seldom more than 0.5 mm long; capsules exserted .....Lescuraea: *Iwatsukiella leucotricha* not known from CA

According to Carter, there are two species of *Hedwigia* vouchered from SLO County, these being *Hedwigia detonsa* and *Hedwigia stellata*. *Hedwigia detonsa* has been collected from the sandstone and conglomerate on Hi Mountain Road, Pozo Summit and Rock Front Ranch and on granite near Black Mountain. It occurs at Santa Rita Ranch and on East Cuesta Ridge. *Hedwigia stellata* is found on rock on both East and West Cuesta Ridge, and in Lynch Canyon south of San Antonio Lake.

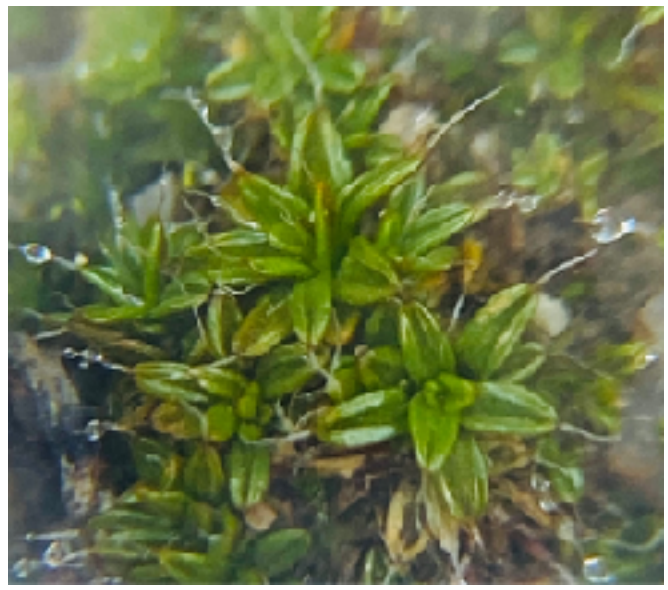
On the next page there is a detailed drawing of both species of *Hedwigia* from the Flora of North America (*Courtesy Flora of North America Association, volume # [27 or 28], Patricia M. Eckel*). The left photo is *Hedwigia detonsa* (iNaturalist) and the right photo is *Hedwigia stellata* (British Bryological Society). The white leaf apices of both species have earned them the common name 'hoarmoss' for the frosty look.



Captions at bottom of previous page.

Returning to the Key on the previous page, and backing up one level from *Hedwigia* to "D", we see the genus *Aloina*. Carter lists two species, *Aloina aloides* and *Aloina bifrons*. Carter notes only one collection of *Aloina aloides* in the area of Rock Front Ranch on Highway 46, and a few collections of *Aloina bifrons* in the Cuyama Valley, Syncline Grade on Highway 58, and the Temblor Range. The Jepson Herbarium, on the other hand, states that *Aloina aloides* does not occur in California. The picture we have comes from the British Bryological Society. The in-rolled leaf edges are a distinctive feature.

Aloina aloides (British Bryological Society)



Aloina bifrons Jordan Collins (CalFlora)

In the next issue we will descend further into the dichotomous key, and we will go all the way down to Z and the genus *Acaulon*. As these pages can be extracted from the Obispoensis PDF file, you could pull all of the following treatments into a personal moss file, and by reference to the Jepson Key, the logic within the key might become obvious. In addition, we will publish comments and corrections from those of you reading these files.

A Great Web Site for Learning about Moss Morphology

Canada's University of British Columbia has an on-line **Introduction to Moss Morphology** which is well-illustrated and is a great starting point to understand the basics of how a moss reproduces and the function of all the parts.

https://www3.botany.ubc.ca/bryophyte/mossintro.html

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Protecting California's Native Flora since 1965

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide non-profit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's plants. The mission of the Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to preserve them in their natural habitat through scientific activities, education and conservation. Membership is open to all. Membership includes the journal, *Artemisia;* the quarterly *Flora*, which gives statewide news and announcements of the activities and conservation issues, and the chapter newsletter, *Obispoensis.*

San Luis Obispo Chapter of the California Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 784
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

Print, Clip & Mail, or use QR Code

Join Today!

- ☐ *Student / Limited Income $25*
- ☐ *Individual $50*
- ☐ *Plant Lover $120*
- ☐ *Supporter $500*
- ☐ *Patron $1,000*
- ☐ *Benefactor $2,500*

I wish to affiliate with the San Luis Obispo Chapter

Inquiries:
Phone: (916) 447-2677 Fax: (916) 447-2727 (State)
e-mail: cnps@cnps.org (State)

Websites:
Websites: www.cnps.org (State) & www.cnpsslo.org (Local)

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